

Exhibit 16

Declaration of Eric Rassbach

Palestine Solidarity Encampment at UCLA

5.6.2024

REFUSING CO-OPTATION

Why would the university try to kill us rather than meet our demands?

The story is simple. Following WWII, the University of California system provided mass, free higher education to the public. In 1970, as the radical student body mobilized to resist US imperialism abroad and racial domination at home, an advisor for Governor Ronald Reagan told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that “we are in danger of producing an educated proletariat. That’s dynamite!”¹ That same year, Reagan cut federal funding and instituted tuition at the UCs to suppress the potential explosion of collective resistance.² The university endowment became the main source of institutional funding. **The technocratic, administrative parasites that have seized control of our education system now require stable sources of revenue from the portfolio, and the cluster bombs, fighter jets, and machine guns used to carry out genocide are risk-free investments.** These weapons are prepaid commodities that the United States government purchases from Lockheed, Boeing, and Raytheon with trillions of taxpayer dollars and are therefore shielded from market volatility.

Many have responded to the university’s violence with shock. Should we really be surprised about what happened? This is the same university that turned *Jackie Robinson Stadium* into an LAPD field jail during the 2020 uprising for Black liberation.³ This is the same university that developed and served as a “lead investor” in PredPol, a racial profiling algorithm sold to LAPD.⁴ This is the same university that opened its doors to the murder of our Black comrades Bunchy Carter and John Huggins in Campbell Hall as part of the FBI’s COINTELPRO

¹ *San Francisco Chronicle*. October 30, 1970, pp. 13. Via NewsBank Archive.

² Franklin, Bruce H. 2000. *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, pp. 126.

³ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-04/ucla-chancellor-calls-lapd-use-of-jackie-robinson-stadium-to-process-arrests-a-violation>

⁴ <https://automatingbanishment.org/assets/AUTOMATING-BANISHMENT.pdf>

program.⁵ This history, combined with the events of the past week, shows that **policing on our campus only serves to harm students.** Most importantly, this university is an arm of the very state that is leading the assault on Gaza.

Aaron Cohen, an IOF Special Operations “veteran,” collaborated with LASD to infiltrate the encampment, continuing in a long tradition of LAPD and IOF joint training.⁶ We also know that the LAPD uses Israeli surveillance software.⁷ **These forces are not distinct entities.** As Joe Biden famously said, “were there not an Israel, the United States of America would have to invent an Israel to protect her interest in the region.”⁸ The inevitable end to Palestine’s occupation will be the first crack in the impending downfall of US imperialism and global racial capitalism. We would like to draw attention to Gazan journalist Refaat Alareer’s final tweet before the IOF assassinated him and his family in a targeted airstrike: “the Democrat[ic] party and Biden are responsible for the Gaza genocide perpetrated by Israel.”⁹

We know about DOD’s Program 1033, which provides LAPD and UCPD with decommissioned military equipment.¹⁰ The assault rifles that snipers pointed at us from the roof of Royce Hall are the same ones that the Israeli Occupation Forces soldiers used to shoot six year old Hind Rajab, as well as countless other children in Palestine. The zionists tormented our encampment by blasting the same song that the IOF and settlers use to torture kidnapped Palestinians. They played the same recordings of babies wailing that the IOF uses to lure Gazans in to bomb them. To all the “shocked” parties who limit the discussion of the past week to administrative failure and free speech, we ask: **why do you draw the line at pepper spray on campus but choose to remain silent about children in mass graves? What gives our**

⁵ <https://dailybruin.com/2019/01/17/throwback-thursday-fifty-year-anniversary-of-bunchy-carter-john-huggins-shooting>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/aacohenofficial/status/1785948545692111204>

⁷ <https://knock-la.com/lapd-is-using-israeli-surveillance-software-that-can-track-your-phone-and-social-media/>

⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/1/30/defies-logic-the-makings-of-joe-bidens-blank-cheque-to-israel>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/itranslate123/status/1731538938181964279>

¹⁰ <https://stoplapdspy.org/policing-strategies-and-tactics/>

suffering greater value than the systematic slaughter in Gaza? Why do we deserve outrage while Palestine deserves indifference?

In 1985, in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid, over 2000 determined UCLA students demonstrated outside administrative offices to force the university to divest from companies operating in South Africa. Chanting “free the people, free the land,” 750 students occupied Murphy Hall and 200 stayed overnight.¹¹ This action, along with continued pressure throughout the UC system, coerced the administration into withdrawing \$3.1 billion worth of investments in apartheid, the largest divestment in the country. In 1990, Nelson Mandela cited the UC protests that led to divestment as a catalyst for apartheid’s demise.¹² That the UC profited from South African apartheid is despicable in itself. Yet it continues to financially benefit from apartheid, occupation, and ethnic cleansing in Palestine. That the UC refuses to take our demands seriously is an indictment of its utter moral bankruptcy. **When will UCLA stop doubling down on genocide?**

The spineless, forgettable lackeys that populate the administration and the Board of Regents want us to think that divestment is impossible. They want us to accept a bureaucratic task force, where our demands will go to die. They assume we will take them at their word and assume it simply cannot be done. They think that they can excuse a hundred years of direct involvement in global oppression by simply pushing out Gene Block. The whole world sees through their lies. We stand on the shoulders of our predecessors: the global struggles that have succeeded in combating imperialism.

We know that divestment has been done before, and the students are resolved to achieve it again. For the Palestinian people, we will not rest until they divest.

Free Palestine,
The Determined Palestine Solidarity Encampment

¹¹ <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin100losa/page/n289/mode/2up>

¹² <https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/visit/bancroft/oral-history-center/projects/managing-protest>